

She followed up with a tweet. She decided to clarify that, and here is the tweet she issued afterward. She said: “I never claimed women and men were treated absolutely equally in every facet of Soviet life. But people’s salaries were set (by the state) in a gender-blind manner. And all women got very generous maternity benefits. Both things are still a pipe dream in our society!”

Can you imagine?

Ms. Omarova clearly knows her views are far outside of the mainstream. How do we know? Well, why else would her most recent resume have been scrubbed of one particular item that was on her resume as recently as 2017?

And that item is the thesis that she wrote when she was a student in Moscow on her Vladimir Lenin personal academic scholarship. The title we know. The title of the thesis was “Karl Marx’s Economic Analysis and the Theory of Revolution in The Capital.”

Unfortunately, that is all I know about this thesis.

Now, this morning, I released a letter that I sent to Ms. Omarova requesting that she provide a copy of this paper in the original Russian to the committee in time for us to translate it so that we can fully consider her nomination.

Like most committees, the Banking Committee requires nominees provide copies of any articles or papers they have written, and that is a very important tool that we use to evaluate a person’s thoughts and fitness and temperament, and judge and where they are coming from.

I am looking forward to receiving that paper from her.

I will conclude with this: You know, in a country as big as ours, where we have 330-some million people, I have no doubt that there are some individuals that we can find here and there who would think of the Soviet Union—that brutal, oppressive, totalitarian, freedom-suppressing, soul-sucking, murderous regime that was the Soviet Union—there must be some people somewhere in America who somehow would compare it favorably to the United States, as shocking as that is.

What has never occurred to me is that a person who thinks that way could possibly be considered to an important, powerful, and prominent position in the Federal Government.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 340, Sarah A.L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Charles E. Schumer, Brian Schatz, Benjamin L. Cardin, Robert Menendez, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Jacky Rosen, Patrick J. Leahy, Mazie Hirono, Margaret Wood Hassan, Jack Reed, Sheldon Whitehouse, Tammy Baldwin, Richard J. Durbin, Chris Van Hollen, Tina Smith.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sarah A.L. Merriam, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 408 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murkowski	Warnock
Feinstein	Murphy	Warren
Gillibrand	Murray	Whitehouse
Graham	Ossoff	Wyden
Hassan	Padilla	

NAYS—47

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Tillis
Crapo	Marshall	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Paul	Young
Fischer	Portman	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). On this vote, the yeas are 53, the nays are 47.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

INFLATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, from gas stations to grocery stores, to utility bills and restaurant checks, the American people are being pummeled by inflation. The cost of everything is going up.

Last week, the Commerce Department reported that a key indicator of inflation had reached the highest level in three decades—30 years.

The Chairman of the Federal Reserve has said that we are unlikely to turn a corner on this until sometime next year. How he knows that, I don’t know. Previously, he said, well, this inflation would be merely transitory, a passing thing. But it is beginning to look like

that is not the case. And, clearly, he is mainly guessing.

With this as a backdrop, our Democratic colleagues are apparently trying to figure out how to inflict even more economic pain on the American people. They spent months negotiating solely among themselves in order to bring about a radical transformation in our country by spending money on programs we don’t need or want—things like permanent welfare for no work requirements; things like tax increases that, contrary to President Biden’s promise, will hit Americans earning less than \$400,000 a year; subsidies for millionaires; buying electric vehicles that most average wage earners can’t afford; taxes that will hurt American businesses and help our major nation-state competitor, China; as well as provide a range of so-called free—they like that word “free”—social safety-net programs that really aren’t free at all.

Now, this isn’t critical funding necessary to lead America out of the pandemic like we did last year on a bipartisan basis. This isn’t even designed to revive our struggling economy. I would argue that it would do just the opposite. It would suppress the recovery from the recession that was caused by the pandemic. This is merely a reckless, partisan spending spree designed to grow the size of government’s role in our daily lives.

In recent weeks, I have heard from more than 50,000 of my constituents—that is a lot—about one absurd example of government overreach proposed by the administration and which is part of the reconciliation bill that is now sitting in front of the House of Representatives. The IRS already knows how much money you make, but now the Biden administration wants to know how you spend it too. This isn’t a safeguard to stop illicit activity like money laundering or tax fraud. That already exists. Any taxpayer who receives a transfer of \$10,000 or more in a single transaction has to report that to the IRS. But what our Democratic colleagues want to do is to invade the privacy of everyday Americans who rarely make five-digit transactions. So tucked in the President’s budget is a new IRS reporting requirement with a much lower threshold, \$600.

If you use your bank accounts to spend or receive more than \$600 in a year’s time, our Democratic colleagues think that should be reported to the IRS. So if you are writing a check for your mortgage or your rent or maybe you are buying a new washer or dryer or refrigerator, the IRS wants to know that you are spending that money.

This is an Agency that has already been plagued by scandals and has hardly been a responsible steward of personal financial data.

Earlier this year, an unknown source within the IRS leaked more than 15 years’ worth of taxpayer information to journalists. And we all remember the IRS targeting conservative-leaning groups during the Obama administration. But the IRS has given even more

personal financial data, literally conducting surveillance on the American people. The trove of information that could be abused gets a lot bigger.

Democrats want to give the IRS more manpower to sift through all of this by doubling the size of the Agency, adding to an army of Internal Revenue agents out searching for more revenue with which to grow the government. So instead of a chicken in every pot, every household will get an audit.

This is, I submit, a fundamental attack on the privacy and financial freedom of everyday Americans and puts all Americans' data at risk of being hacked or leaked.

It also places a huge new burden on our community banks and credit unions. Having to organize and transmit all this additional data to the IRS in a secure way is no easy task. Does the administration plan to help local banks, credit unions do this? I doubt it. It is just going to add to their overhead and to their administrative burdens.

Our Democratic colleagues also want to reinstate the so-called SALT deduction, which allows wealthy individuals in blue States—it is no coincidence—to pay less in taxes. According to the liberal Tax Policy Center, 93 percent of those making a million dollars or more would get a tax break.

So much for our Democratic colleagues' rhetoric about millionaires and billionaires getting a tax break. They want to make sure that each one of them gets about a \$48,000 tax cut under their proposal. This isn't an attempt to support those who are struggling to make ends meet; it is a financial lifeline for millionaires and billionaires.

This type of legislation our colleagues are trying to pass includes a massive, ill-conceived tax plan; government overreach; irresponsible spending; and radical policies that put unnecessary burden on beleaguered American workers and families.

Earlier this year, our Democratic friends charged nearly \$2 trillion to the taxpayer credit card in a party-line vote. Unlike the COVID-19 relief bills we passed last year virtually unanimously, one after the other, when the Biden administration came into office, the first thing they did was spend \$2 trillion in borrowed money, only 10 percent of which was related to COVID-19.

So they did that without any Republican help. Now they are trying to figure out how to go on an even bigger spending blowout—once again, all alone. But they think upping the credit limit should be a bipartisan task. Our friends across the aisle have talked about how, historically, lifting the debt ceiling has been a bipartisan endeavor, but they failed to mention that so has spending.

There has never been a time in our country's history when one party has spent trillions of dollars and aspires to spend trillions of dollars more without the support of a single person on the other side of the aisle.

Why would Republicans vote to increase the debt limit and sign off on this reckless spending? If someone stole your credit card and ran up the bill, would you up your own credit limit so they could continue shopping? No way. But that is exactly what Democrats are asking Republicans to do by upping the debt limit.

They have the votes. They have a process by which they can raise the debt limit, and they need to do it before we risk a default, according to the timeline given to us by Secretary Yellen.

So our Democratic colleagues have chosen to light taxpayer dollars on fire, but we are not going to hand them another match. We have been clear on that point since at least July. Unsurprisingly, our friends on the other side don't like this plan. They see the dangers in continuing to drive up the debt without any action to address the root causes, and they want to have Republicans to share the blame.

But what needs to happen is some accountability because accountability will bring with it some fiscal responsibility. But as long as our Democratic colleagues can continue to spend trillions of dollars in borrowed money on their reckless tax-and-spending spree and have us join them in raising the debt limit, then no one—no voter, no taxpayer—can actually know who is to blame.

Well, if Democrats want to spend alone, they have to up the debt ceiling alone, too, and we know they have the tools and the votes to do it. But rather than addressing this problem in July or August or September, our Democratic colleagues have waited until the last minute and march us closer and closer to a debt crisis. They have had the time to up the debt limit on their own, and they have had the means to do it. So they need to stop playing chicken with an economic crisis and do what they know needs to be done.

So far, Democrats have not been held back by their razor-thin majority. It didn't stop them from spending \$2 trillion in borrowed money at the beginning of this year. It hasn't slowed their plans to try to spend trillions more this fall. And now it shouldn't stop them from increasing the debt limit on their own so the American people can see who is responsible and hold those elected officials accountable in the 2022 election.

The Democratic majority of the Senate has embraced a go-it-alone attitude on legislating all year, and these are just some of the examples of what that has produced: tax increases on the middle class; car subsidies for millionaires; taxes that hurt American businesses and American jobs but actually help China; providing so-called free, taxpayer-funded social safety net programs to try to turn the United States into a European welfare state; increased IRS surveillance of the everyday finances of average Americans; and I mentioned, finally, tax breaks for millionaires and billionaires.

So now is the time to reap what our Democratic colleagues have sown, and I hope they will act sooner rather than later.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, shortly, I will be making a unanimous consent request to confirm the nomination of Ms. Karen Hedlund to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board.

Ms. Hedlund served as Deputy Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, and before that, as Chief Counsel at the Federal Highway Administration. She has spent most of her career in the development and financing of infrastructure projects across the United States, including improvements to the national freight rail system.

She is well qualified to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board, which we know is so critical to the movement of freight; and her appointment comes at a time when there are many important issues and decisions before the Board.

Ms. Hedlund was nominated by the President in April. She received bipartisan approval in the Commerce Committee now over 2 months ago, and it is time for the full Senate to do the same.

So I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the following nomination: Calendar No. 315, Karen Jean Hedlund, to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board for a term expiring December 31, 2025. I further ask unanimous consent that the nomination be confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, article II of the Constitution gives this body some important responsibilities, including the responsibility to provide advice and consent on Officers of the United States. We have to confirm people after they have been nominated by the President.

As a Member of the Senate, I take this responsibility seriously, and I do my due diligence once a nominee has been submitted by the President and consideration by the Senate. I have done that here.

And in the process of that due diligence process with this nominee, I submitted a number of written questions to Ms. Hedlund in order to develop a better understanding of how she would respond to certain issues that are directly relevant to the position for which she is seeking confirmation from the Surface Transportation Board.

Specifically, I asked her how she would approach: 1, cost-benefit analysis in proposed regulations; 2, the

scope of the SBT's rulemaking authority; 3, how she would approach consideration of rate regulation, rate caps, or price controls; 4, her definition of the public interest, which is a key term that comes up as used in STB proceedings; 5, how she would balance Amtrak access to the freight rail network with reliable freight service; and, 6, how she would approach the carrying out of the NEPA process, including the definitions behind the key regulatory terms at issue.

These are all issues that are really relevant to the STB, and these are the kinds of questions that deal with the kinds of things she would do if confirmed as a member of the STB.

Needless to say, I was disappointed with my responses. Some of the answers avoided answering my questions; some answers appeared to be purposely vague; and some refused even directly to answer the question.

So for these reasons, I voted against Ms. Hedlund's nomination before the Commerce Committee, and my position has not changed since that vote took place. I am not comfortable granting my consent today, and I will not be, until I have the information and more thorough, responsive answers to my reasonable questions. And so for these reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Ms. BALDWIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFGHANISTAN

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, tomorrow marks the 20th anniversary of the launch of the U.S. military offensive in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaida in response to their ruthless attack on America. As a result of our Nation's resolve and the sacrifice and service of our brave men and women over the past two decades, Osama bin Laden is dead, and our homeland has been guarded against additional large-scale terror attacks.

Up until President Joe Biden's sloppy and poorly planned exit from Afghanistan, al-Qaida and the Taliban were on the run, but today, due to the decisions of President Biden, the radical extremists who sponsored Osama bin Laden and partnered with al-Qaida, who are responsible for the deadliest terror attack in history, are back in power.

How did we get here?

It became apparent at last week's Armed Services hearing, after I questioned our top military leaders, that President Biden made a completely unconditional withdrawal. The President simply looked at the calendar and saw what he thought would be an easy political victory and decided we would be

out of Afghanistan by the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

Another fact that became clear after the hearing last week is that President Biden casually dismissed the sound advice of his own military leaders. He discounted the tactical and strategic value of keeping a small force in place to defeat the terrorists. Then, to cover for those mistakes, President Biden misled the public about the advice that he was given and refused to take.

So let's be clear about what happened as a result of the President's ignoring his own generals' recommendations. He abandoned American citizens behind enemy lines, left strong allies and partners to fend for themselves against the Taliban, tarnished America's reputation, and created the conditions that led to the devastating loss of 13 brave American servicemembers. He stubbornly led our country into the most disastrous diplomatic and military debacle in modern history.

Those now in control of Afghanistan are a who's who of international terrorists. Nearly half of the members of the new Afghan Government are on the U.N. Security Council's terrorism blacklist—that is the U.N., folks, their terrorism blacklist—including the Acting Prime Minister and both of his Deputies. At least two principal members of the Haqqani network, which is a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, are in the highest positions of the Taliban's new government. The Minister of the Interior is on the FBI's "Most Wanted" list. His uncle, the Minister of Refugees, is designated a terrorist by our government. Together, the U.S. Government values the reward for their arrests at \$15 million.

The Biden doctrine put America's most wanted back in charge of a terrorist training ground and increased the risk of attacks against our homeland. And we didn't leave the terrorists emptyhanded either. In our rush for the exits, we left tens of billions of dollars' worth of military weapons and gear behind, which is now in the hands of the enemy. We can expect to encounter this tactical equipment again on the battlefield—but our own equipment being used against us. Here are just a few numbers: 600,000 weapons, 22,000 humvees, and more than 200 aircraft. Folks, we left America's most wanted with America's best weapons.

But it is not just weapons and military capabilities; President Joe Biden left behind our own citizens, stranded in a foreign country governed by known terrorists. As much as the administration wants to act like this is all in the past and we have closed the book on Afghanistan, it is just not reality. Right now, we have American citizens stranded in Afghanistan. Let that sink in for just a moment, folks. Americans and our Afghan partners, who worked with us over the past two decades—interpreters and translators—are all sitting ducks for the Taliban. When we ask for an accurate accounting of who and how many are still left,

the Pentagon points the finger at the State Department, which then goes radio silent.

The administration is downplaying the evils of the Taliban, and its refusal to state hard facts is stunning.

The chorus of praise from the State Department and the White House in calling the Taliban "businesslike" and "professional" would be comical if it weren't so horrifying. If using Kabul's soccer stadiums to publicly execute dissidents, overseeing the legal rape of young girls through child marriage, and settling disputes by chopping off hands and feet is how the Taliban does business, then President Biden is right—they are truly pros.

GEN Mark Milley admitted the exit was a "strategic failure" in his testimony last week. Folks, that is an understatement. President Biden and his top foreign policy adviser, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, have serially failed to own up to this fiasco. Someone must take responsibility for this colossal failure.

As we uncovered again last week, President Biden's decisions led us here, right back where we began. Both General McKenzie and General Milley testified last week that "al-Qaida is still at war with us" and that within the year, they "could be reconstituted with aspirations to attack the U.S." During Joe Biden's campaign, he promised a return to normalcy. Little did we know that meant a return to vulnerability and an America that is less safe from terrorists who attacked our homeland 20 years ago.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, on August 16, as everything was collapsing in Afghanistan, President Biden said:

We have developed counterterrorism over-the-horizon capability that will allow us to keep our eyes firmly fixed on any direct threats to the United States in the region and to act quickly and decisively if needed.

He was stating that we don't have to have an on-the-ground presence in Afghanistan to keep Americans safe and that we can rely instead on over-the-horizon strikes, where we use drones and other assets to take out terrorists from hundreds or even thousands of miles away.

Since then, we have learned that the President wasn't being truthful.

At the Senate Armed Services Committee's open hearing on Afghanistan's disaster, CENTCOM Commander General Kenneth McKenzie testified on the immense challenges we face in preventing terrorist groups, like al-Qaida and ISIS, from using Afghanistan as a launching pad to attack us here at home.

What President Biden seems to conveniently ignore is that a successful over-the-horizon counterterrorism strategy requires more than just the ability to hit targets across long distances. We also have to be able to identify targets; we have to be able to locate targets; and we have to be able to reach those targets.

To do this effectively, we first need a U.S. presence in the region or at least a reliable on-the-ground partner there. Without that, our ability to gather the intelligence necessary to pick the right targets is severely degraded.

We saw the tragic consequences of acting on incomplete intelligence on August 29, when a drone strike mistakenly killed 10 innocent Afghans, including 7 children and an aid worker with ties to the United States.

Second, we need a reliable way to actually get to the target.

President Biden likes comparing Afghanistan to countries like Yemen and Syria, but there is a huge difference between these countries. Afghanistan is landlocked, and our drones can't just fly over the ocean to get there, like they can to Syria and to Yemen.

When it comes to Afghanistan, our drones have to cross over other countries on the way, and those countries are not obligated to allow us to use their airspace.

General McKenzie confirmed to me during our hearing that, because we have withdrawn from Afghanistan, we need to rely on Pakistan's airspace if we want to reach targets like ISIS-K or al-Qaida, and that should concern every American.

Pakistan, historically, is the Taliban's fiercest international supporter, and they could revoke our access at any point. And if they do, we would need to ask China, Iran, or Central Asian nations with close ties to Russia for permission to use their airspace or even their bases in order to conduct counterterrorism operations.

When I asked about this during the SASC hearing, Secretary Austin confirmed recent reports that the U.S. military—the finest fighting force in the world—has had conversations with Russia about using their bases in Central Asian nations on Afghanistan's northern border.

Secretary Austin insisted that we haven't asked for Russia's permission to use these bases; we are simply considering an offer that they made. But if we have to consider an offer from the Kremlin just to keep al-Qaida from surging back in Afghanistan, President Biden hasn't put America on a very strong footing.

The bottom line is that our chaotic exit from Afghanistan has made it much harder for the U.S. military to keep the American people safe from terrorists.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Milley said during last week's hearing that Presidents are elected to make strategic decisions. He also told us that the Afghanistan withdrawal was a strategic failure.

And he was right. The way things stand today, we are at risk of recreating the same conditions that existed before 9/11. The Taliban is running things in Kabul, and given their longstanding partnership with al-Qaida, it is naive to expect that they would prevent these terrorists from operating freely.

Anyone who says that we are safer today than we were 20 years ago is getting ahead of themselves, and that goes for President Biden too. He needs to be more honest about what his decision to leave Afghanistan, no matter the cost, means for our Nation's security.

Real leaders take responsibility for their mistakes; they do not make excuses for them. And, unfortunately, that is all we have heard from the President so far.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

MR. INHOFE. Mr. President, over the past—first of all, let me just agree with the Senator from Nebraska. She is exactly on target here. This is a problem that we are in a—I have said several times, I cannot remember a time that we have not been—that we have been in a greater threat than we are today.

Over the past 2 weeks, just to kind of let you know where we are now, the Armed Services Committee held two classified sessions and two open hearings on Afghanistan. That is the committee that actually had these in their schedule. These are really eye-openers, and I think we have a lot of time to uncover what happened and where we go from here.

First, we heard from General Milley, the commander on the ground in Afghanistan through July. He went up to the July period of time. Then we heard from the Pentagon's top policy official, Colin Kahl. In open testimony, we heard from Secretary of Defense Austin, the President's top military adviser; General Milley; and General McKenzie, who is in charge of the combatant command that oversees the Middle East. We also heard from two outside experts with decades of experience following Afghanistan and the region. Here is what we learned. Now, I am going to list these things. There are actually seven things we learned, and it is very significant.

No. 1, we learned that top military leaders advised President Biden to keep at least 2,500 troops. Now, the President came out and said that wasn't true. Yet every military person who offered testimony has said, yes, that is exactly true. They all recommended to President Biden to keep at least 2,500 troops in Afghanistan. If not, then, you know the results that are coming from that. You know what we are living with today.

This advice goes counter to what President Biden told the American people back in August. He said his generals did not advise him to leave troops there. Now we know that is not true, and we know that he said that and he

misled the American people. This is a very significant point.

The second thing: As I said, we learned that al-Qaida was never gone from Afghanistan. As Biden says, they were there all along, and they were a big part of the Taliban's victory. Now they are focused on external operations. Al-Qaida and ISIS could be able to strike America's soil as soon as a year from now; that is, striking us on our soil here in America. Even worse, the withdrawal from Afghanistan was a shot of adrenaline in the arm of the radical Islamic terrorists everywhere. They now have a victory to point to.

The third thing: We learned that by completely withdrawing from Afghanistan, we nearly zeroed out our capabilities to strike those same terrorist organizations. We understand this. Not many people would disagree with this. General McKenzie said he was not confident that the United States would be able to prevent al-Qaida or ISIS from using Afghanistan as a launching pad for terrorist activity, and here is why—and this is important. The administration isn't talking about this. Afghanistan poses a unique set of challenges. It is landlocked. We don't have any bases nearby. This was driven home by our Senator—a few minutes ago—from Nebraska. Our generals confirmed that it is extremely difficult and costly to get the intelligence and conduct the types of operations the President said he would do. This came from all of the military leaders.

Let's not forget—we still have not killed the terrorists directly responsible for the attack that killed 13 U.S. servicemembers. Just imagine—they are still out there.

President Biden decided to put the Taliban in charge, hoping they changed. The first thing they did was broadcast a video on Afghan national TV saying the United States deserved the 9/11 attack. It turns out that the Taliban is the old Taliban. They haven't really changed a bit. What this means is that Afghanistan is now the safest place in the world for radical Islamic terrorism. We are at greater risk, and we are less safe.

The fourth thing out of seven: We learned—and I quote General McKenzie directly—"The war on terror is not over, and the war in Afghanistan is not over either." But President Biden told the American people and told the whole world that the war is over. We know better than that. Evidently, the terrorists didn't get the memo. As General Milley put it, "Al-Qaida is still at war with us, and never has not been."

No. 5: We learned without a shadow of a doubt that our allies and partners and our adversaries, too, are questioning our credibility and resolve. In fact, General Milley said that our credibility has been "damaged." At last week's hearing, our experts confirmed that President Biden's botched withdrawal has caused our allies to question our ability to stick to our strategies and policies.

No. 6: We learned that our military leaders would not call President Biden's evacuation operation an "extraordinary success" like he did. General Milley called it a "strategic failure."

Now, I want to be clear. This wasn't a failure on the part of our troops. Our troops served admirably. They rescued 120,000 people. They did what they were told to do. Their Commander in Chief led them astray.

As Dr. Vali Nasr said just the other day—he told our committee last Thursday that the end game in Afghanistan was not our "finest moment." That is an understatement, and that is someone trying to figure out some way to justify what went on.

The last thing, No. 7: We learned that President Biden simply ignored the conditions-based approach.

Now, one thing I will say about the previous approach. People are confused sometimes about what our previous President said. He had a conditions-based approach, and the hallmark of it or the center of that conditions-based approach was that we would leave troops there to protect our Americans. We don't even know right now how many Americans are there.

So we learned that President Biden simply ignored the conditions-based approach. President Biden could have easily said: The Taliban has not met our conditions. We are going to stay in Afghanistan and ensure that no terrorists are able to hit us.

That is what his military advisers recommended that he say, and he didn't do that. In fact, President Biden ignored the conditions on the ground and instead decided to accept a significant amount of strategic risk. That means the United States is less safe today, and our credibility for the future is shot through, and that is what his decision means.

We lost credibility because we left Americans and our Afghan allies behind. No one will believe what America says after this, and I am not sure why they should. I can't think of a time in history that this has happened. This is simply just something that is brand new.

One thing we didn't get clear answers on despite the repeated bipartisan requests is exactly how many Americans and Afghan partners did we leave behind and what is going to happen to them. DOD pointed to the State Department and vice versa. That is just unacceptable.

We don't know how many people we left behind. You know, we heard the Secretary actually made a statement approximating at one time between 3- and 4- and 500, and the next approximation was closer to 10,000. So we don't really know that. It is bad enough that we leave them behind, but we don't even know how many people we left.

This is why I am going to continue calling for more hearings until we get—we have to get the answers. This isn't going to go away.

Why does all this matter? America is less safe than we were before because of President Biden's decisions. Six years ago, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said:

I think [President Biden] has been wrong on . . . every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades.

America is now more vulnerable to terrorist attacks. We all understand that, and the whole world understands that. We have no plan to meet that threat.

We also have to think about what this means for our biggest challenge, and that is, of course, our challengers of China, Russia, North Korea, Iran. They are all celebrating now. China is engaged in a historic nuclear buildup—one that we have never seen anything like before. Russia just conducted its largest military exercise in four decades. They are watching this debacle and thinking how weak America looks. Now, if President Biden can't get counterterrorism right, how can his administration put together a strategy to confront China and Russia?

Unfortunately, this strategic failure of our Afghanistan exit is encouraging our adversaries to test us—the exact opposite of deterrence. That is what I am worried about now. I am more worried about it after last week. That is why I am going to keep fighting for more open hearings so the American people and our adversaries and our enemies and our friends will understand what it is all about. And this will be the real America, not what they experienced recently.

That is why I continue to push for adequate defense funding, to make sure that we prioritize nuclear modernization, and to pass this year's NDAA as soon as we can get it to the floor.

By the way, this is the one bill that I have every expectation we will get. The NDAA, the National Defense Authorization Act, is one that we have passed for 61 consecutive years. I have every expectation that we will do it now. I don't like the idea that the Democrats are putting this off as if there is no threat out there. I don't think that is going to happen.

That is why we have to keep getting to the bottom of this. We have taken some big hits—big hits—out there, and we have got to recover. OK.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, I am here today to join my colleagues and first associate myself with all of the words from the ranking Republican from the Armed Services Committee, Senator INHOFE.

Very well said, Senator, and I agree wholeheartedly.

I express my profound disappointment in President Biden's handling of the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. The American people and certainly my constituents in North Da-

kota are upset, and they have every right to be.

For weeks, we were inundated with horrifying stories of Americans and our allies fleeing for their lives, paired with the constant stream of disturbing images and videos out of Afghanistan as it was taken over by the Taliban. Yet, somehow—somehow—President Biden has the audacity to call the withdrawal an "extraordinary success." Well, President Biden is wrong. It was not an extraordinary success. The withdrawal was an abject failure, and President Biden bears all of the responsibility for it, and that is to say that he is the reason it was an abject failure, because our heroes in uniform did an incredible job against very difficult odds and, frankly, with very poor leadership coming from the Oval Office.

The reality is, the President misled the American people to justify his decisions and to downplay his failures. Now, terrorists are emboldened, our allies are questioning the resolve of the United States, and the United States is less safe because of it.

The reality is, his deceitful rhetoric really began several months ago. In August, he led us to believe our military leaders were united in their support of his withdrawal plans. Like many of my colleagues, I expressed concerns at the time when his plans were first announced and urged him to follow a conditions-based withdrawal. He did not.

To rationalize his choices, he worked to convince us that the most senior leaders in the Pentagon were standing behind him, agreed with him. They gave him this advice, he said. As we have heard from multiple generals, that is simply not true.

The President also misled us about the conditions on the ground in Afghanistan. In an August speech, he said the Afghan military force had "300,000 strong, incredibly well equipped fighters." The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction said in a report that is not true. It said that of the 300,000 members of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces, only 182,000 of them were Afghan National Army members and the rest were members of the Afghan National Police.

Well, when I discuss the number of servicemembers in our Armed Forces, I don't include the number of police officers or even FBI agents. That would be inaccurate at best, and then deceitful at worst. Yet, here, the President is doing exactly that.

President Biden used that 300,000 number to claim the Afghan Government could defend itself, and he later tried to say no one could predict their forces would fall so quickly.

Was he being dishonest with the American people, or was he just not being given accurate information by his senior leadership about the conditions there?

Well, neither ignorance nor incompetence are a very good answer.

Later in the month, when it became clear the withdrawal was going to be a failure, President Biden insisted that the United States would get all Americans who wanted to leave out of Afghanistan. Well, he didn't. He failed.

And no one, including him—and least of all him—wants to take responsibility. The State Department says, you know, talk to the Defense Department. The Defense Department says talk to the State Department. But no one is taking responsibility.

And I say the buck stops in the Oval Office with the President, who let that happen and who is letting his team dodge taking responsibility, all while Americans fear for their lives in a country run by terrorists and terrorist sympathizers.

Near the end of August, after 13 brave U.S. military members were killed in an ISIS-K terrorist attack during the botched withdrawal, President Biden rushed to release a statement taking credit for this retaliatory drone strike.

He said: "I said we would go after the group responsible for the attack on our troops and innocent civilians in Kabul, and we have."

Well, except he hadn't. It was later revealed, as we know, that the strike did not take out any ISIS-K leaders. In fact, it took out 10 civilians, including 7 children. But, since then, the President said nothing. He didn't say anything about this horrifying revelation when it was clear that he misled the American people in the wake of the strike.

Our military leaders did not agree with the withdrawal plans. The Afghan Army was not prepared to defend itself. We did not get every American out of the country, and justice was not delivered to ISIS-K or its leaders after it killed 13 American heroes.

And what now? What do we have to show for it?

Well, America is less safe than it was when President Biden became President. As our top military leaders testified in yet another contradiction of President Biden's claims, al-Qaida is alive in Afghanistan and looks to carry out a strike right here on American soil.

How are we supposed to stop it?

Our military leaders don't have faith in the over-the-horizon strategy that President Biden repeatedly touts to give us reliable information.

Who is going to help us?

Our strongest allies and partners and longest standing friends vocally distanced themselves from us amid this botched withdrawal.

All of this is what President Biden called an extraordinary success. Well, it is an extraordinary embarrassment is what it is. The American people are smart enough to not fall for such an obvious attempt to hide the truth from them.

That is why we, on the Armed Services Committee, are going to continue investigating the withdrawal and holding the Commander in Chief account-

able for his poor judgment and actions, even if he won't take the responsibility. That is what our constituents expect and deserve, and I urge my colleagues to join in supporting those efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, tomorrow marks the 20th anniversary of Operation Enduring Freedom, and the start—the beginning—of those combat operations in Afghanistan. It is a benchmark that makes what has happened on the ground during and since our disastrous withdrawal from Kabul all the more disgusting.

Over the past 2 months, we have listened in disbelief as mouthpieces at the State Department, the Pentagon, and the White House talked about the Taliban in the same way they would have addressed a legitimate governing body.

Last week, during a hearing before the Armed Services Committee, we saw our civilian and military leaders evade responsibility for the violence, death, and chaos that has occurred on their watch. But we also listened closely as they revealed appalling inconsistencies between the spin from the White House and the reality of the situation on the ground.

Here is the reality: Afghanistan is under the control of terrorists. These terrorists have longstanding ties with al-Qaida and the Haqqani network, and those relationships aren't going to take a back seat now that the Taliban is in charge of the entire country. This was no ordinary transfer of power. Afghanistan isn't Germany or France or the United States, and we shouldn't pretend that it is, because it is impossible to act as a legitimate government when your goal is not to govern but your goal is to manipulate through acts of terror.

This is what the Taliban is doing, and it is not happening in secret. The cameras are rolling. The world is watching. Inclusivity clearly isn't a priority, as much as the White House would like to make out that it is. The Taliban cleared out the women's affairs ministry and replaced it with "Ministry for Preaching and Guidance and the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice."

The Taliban's desire to curry favor with China has Uyghurs living in Afghanistan running scared. Afghanistan was a haven for these people during the Cultural Revolution, and now the families of those who fled are afraid that the Taliban is going to round them up—yes, round up the Uyghur Muslims—and sell them—that is right—sell them to the Chinese Communist Party in exchange for economic aid.

Fears that the Taliban would weaponize access to the internet became reality before the last American left the country. They are well on their way to creating a tightly controlled

online cesspool of dangerous anti-Western propaganda.

Meanwhile, the Afghan economy is in the gutter. The Taliban's military campaign shut down basic commerce in much of the country, making food shortages worse and putting a million children—a million children—at risk of starvation and death.

Healthcare infrastructure is collapsing. And now the Afghan people are facing the possibility of blackouts because the Taliban can't be bothered to figure out how they are going to pay the electric bill.

And what intel we do have suggests that al-Qaida will use this chaos void left by Biden's disastrous withdrawal to rebuild their operations. That is right—al-Qaida is present in Afghanistan.

I think it important to understand that all of this violence and disorder barely scratches the surface of what the Taliban is capable of instigating.

On August 20, President Biden stated with absolute certainty: "I have seen no question of our credibility from our allies around the world."

During last week's hearing, General Milley disagreed with that assessment. I disagree with that assessment, as do many Tennesseans that I talk with when I am home every weekend. They understand that Operation Enduring Freedom may have come to an end, but that the world is still watching to see how the United States of America is going to respond to one of the most anti-equality, anti-peace, and anti-freedom organizations on the face of the Earth.

Our actions and our reactions will inform those from the rest of the world, and it is time for the Biden administration to recognize that and to act accordingly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator ROUNDS and I be allowed to speak for 5 minutes each before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, it gives me no pleasure to stand on the Senate floor today and talk about President Biden's ill-advised and chaotic withdrawal; to talk about the consequences for the people of Afghanistan, who trusted us and who took our side for 20 years; and to talk about the tremendous harm it has done to America's reputation.

The President, I think, believes that the cost of this debacle has been only a few weeks of bad press. I think he is, sadly, wrong. Perhaps the President is banking on the American people forgetting that the disaster took place on his watch, but it turns out this is a disaster of historic proportions. We will be reeling from this debacle for years and decades to come.

The President may try to change the subject, but the cold truth is that our

Nation will be paying the price when we are dead and gone and these pages are in the position of senior leadership in this country.

Last week, my colleagues and I, on the Armed Services Committee, heard directly from our Nation's top military leaders who had been advising the President on Afghanistan. Their testimonies made clear what we had known all along, that President Biden not only ignored their advice, which he has the power to do as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, but that he then misrepresented that advice to the American people.

In a national TV interview, when asked whether top military advisers had recommended leaving a small troop presence behind to keep a lid on the situation, which would have kept all hell from breaking loose, the President insisted that no one, to his knowledge, had made that recommendation.

We know that statement by Joe Biden was not true. The President got good advice, and then incredibly pled ignorance.

He also got good advice from Democrats. And I would point out my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator WHITEHOUSE, when this was first broached in an open meeting and the administration was explaining what was going to take place, Senator WHITEHOUSE said this sounds like it is going to be a lot like the fall of Saigon in April of 1974. Senator WHITEHOUSE, as the son of a Foreign Service Officer, had an all too close recollection of the disaster that occurred in Saigon back in the seventies, and he warned the administration officials that this might happen again.

And yet the President said no one, to his knowledge, made this recommendation or gave these warnings. This is a President who promised to shoot straight with the American people, who said in February: "You can handle anything as long as you are told the truth."

I wish the President actually believed that and subscribed to that and lived by that.

The American people can handle the truth, and they need to be told the truth. Here is one bit of hard truth from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley: "Our exit from Afghanistan was a 'strategic failure.'"

From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs: "It has caused 'damage' to America's credibility."

That is from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. I appreciate him leveling with the committee and leveling with the American people.

That damage was on full display this past weekend, when the former Afghan Ambassador, Adela Raz, was asked by Axios: Do you still trust the United States?

Her answer was simple, bleak, and understandable: "No. Sorry."

That was her answer: "No. Sorry."

She does not trust the United States anymore.

This loss of trust extends far beyond Afghanistan. As General Milley noted, "Our credibility with allies and partners around the world and with adversaries is being intensely reviewed by them." And he said, yes, "damaged" is the correct word.

Simply put, when we abandon our friends, our partners around the world start to wonder if they can trust us, if we will have their backs. This hurts our ability to cooperate with our allies to deter threats and to provide security for the American people, and it emboldens our adversaries to act more aggressively.

We have already seen this from China in the past week. China has been signaling to Taiwan by ramping up their air missions near Taiwan. They have been signaling to our friends in Taiwan that America is an unreliable partner. Even before our troops had fully left Kabul, Chinese media wasted no time predicting that we will also abandon friends in Taiwan if and when China invades that country—a matter of concern.

Will this embolden Iran? Terrorist groups in Pakistan who support the Taliban remain a serious concern.

But perhaps the worst breach of trust in this dark chapter was between our government and our own people. During the withdrawal, President Biden assured us on national television—and I quote the President's grammar—"If there is American citizens left in Afghanistan, we're gonna stay to get them all out."

"If there is American citizens left in Afghanistan, we're gonna stay to get them all out."

Days later, that promise went out the window. The President dismissed those Americans staying by saying many of them wanted to stay in Afghanistan.

This repeated pattern of broken promises and our failure to own these decisions will only further weaken our country, our alliances, and our national security.

Sadly, we must get about the business of rehabilitating our reputation with our allies and the way our enemies and adversaries look at us.

I stand with my colleagues today who are committed to holding this administration accountable.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. ROUNDS. Madam President, tomorrow marks the 20th anniversary of the day the United States entered Afghanistan—the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom.

On October 7, 2001, the U.S. military conducted its first strike on the terrorists responsible for attacking our Nation on 9/11.

As President Bush said on that day: It was not a mission we asked for but a mission that we would fulfill.

For the past two decades, brave men and women have answered the call and put on the uniform of our country to

fight terrorists in the name of freedom. We were a beacon of hope in a region of chaos. Our presence made a difference.

As I travel my home State of South Dakota, I have heard from many people who were disturbed by the events that unfolded during our final days in Afghanistan. I share their frustrations.

Together, we watched the Taliban forcefully regain control of an entire country that we worked so hard to keep free from terrorist groups. We watched the credibility of the United States on the world's stage diminish as we carelessly left our friends and allies behind. We watched civilians hopelessly cling to the wings of aircraft in desperate hope of escape. And we watched 13 brave men and women in uniform lose their lives while helping others seek freedom. As we mourn the loss of their lives, we recognize and appreciate their service to our Nation.

We also remember all those who fought by our side for 20 years, many of whom remain trapped in Afghanistan.

A citizen of South Dakota, Brandy Roseland, a veteran from Belle Fourche, worked as a contractor in Afghanistan. That is where she met her interpreter. According to Brandy, her interpreter served with the highest distinction and faced great personal risk, often putting himself in harm's way to aid and protect Americans and his fellow Afghans.

On one such occasion, Brandy's interpreter discovered an American contractor who died in an accident outside of Kabul. The interpreter singlehandedly returned the contractor's body, as well as sensitive equipment and documents, to the U.S. Embassy. That took courage. Brandy returned to the United States, but she stayed in contact with her interpreter.

When Afghanistan began to fall to the Taliban, she knew that she needed to do all she could to help him get out safely. That is when Brandy called us and asked if we could help him escape the clutches of the Taliban.

For weeks, our office worked relentlessly to maneuver his application for a special immigrant visa throughout the bureaucratic process at the State Department. Our work was ultimately successful from an administrative standpoint, but the overall mission was a failure.

While we had done all we could to help the interpreter receive his visa, our forces had exited before he could get on a plane to safety because of the President's date certain which he set for withdrawal.

Today, this interpreter remains in hiding in Afghanistan. If he is found by the Taliban, his fate will certainly be sealed.

We all know that there are no easy answers when it comes to Afghanistan, but there was clearly a wrong one.

For months, we had warned of the perils of making an arbitrary decision based on the calendar as opposed to an assessment of the conditions on the ground. And we weren't alone.

As the only Republican member of both the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees, I have had the opportunity these past few weeks to hear from the senior military officers who advised President Biden: General Milley, Secretary Austin, and General McKenzie. Their message to the President was clear: a withdrawal on a date certain, without conditions, would lead to the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban.

Despite receiving the best military advice in the world, President Biden decided to use his own judgment, and he made the wrong decision. His directive to withdraw on a date certain, without regard for the conditions on the ground, needlessly put American soldiers in harm's way and forced our military to undertake an assignment which they simply could not totally complete.

Our military simply ran out of time. They could not get all of our Americans out, and they could not get all of our Afghan allies out, including Brandy's interpreter.

But it didn't have to end this way. Our military leaders offered the President the correct path forward. Their Commander in Chief failed them.

Lately, the President has blamed a lot of people for his failure. This includes the Afghan security forces and his own generals, who he falsely claimed advised him to make this decision. But this does not fall on any of them.

President Biden owns this debacle, and history will not judge him kindly. Because of his error, al-Qaida now has a breeding ground. America is less safe. The world is less safe.

I will close with a message for our veterans. While I was Governor, I attended 31 funerals in South Dakota for South Dakotans who died fighting the War on Terror. We will not forget their sacrifice nor their family's loss.

While freedom may not endure in Afghanistan today, for 20 years, you—you veterans—you protected our Nation and kept the fight away from our doorstep. Your service was not in vain. Your sacrifice made a difference. You represent the best of our country, and your Nation is grateful.

Please always remember it is not the politician who protects our right to vote; it is not the journalist who protects our freedom of speech; and it is not the preacher who protects our freedom of religion. All of our freedoms are defended and protected, generation after generation, by the men and women who put on the uniform of the United States of America.

We are grateful to you for your sacrifice and your service. May God continue to bless all of you veterans, and may the Good Lord continue to bless these United States of America.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF SARAH A. L. MERRIAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today, the Senate will consider Sarah

Merriam's nomination to be a United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut. I support the nomination of this highly qualified jurist.

As a U.S. magistrate judge for over 6 years, Judge Merriam has presided over hundreds of matters, including a number of trials that proceeded to final judgment. She has proven herself to be evenhanded, impartial, and mindful of the limited role that judges play in our system of justice.

Judge Merriam also has extensive experience litigating in Federal court—both in private practice and as an assistant Federal defender for nearly 8 years.

Letters of support the Judiciary Committee received for Judge Merriam's nomination underscore the widespread respect she has earned for her skill, qualifications, temperament, and fidelity to the rule of law. The letters came from both Democrats and Republicans and from prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Two Republican attorneys who practice law in Connecticut—Ross Garber, who has worked for numerous Republican officials, and Stanley Twardy, Jr., who served as U.S. Attorney in Connecticut under President Reagan—wrote: "We are former advisors and appointees of Republican officials and have been involved in the selection and vetting of judges. Today we write in unqualified support of the nomination of Magistrate Judge Sarah Merriam to serve as a judge on the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut."

They added, "As a magistrate judge, Judge Merriam has been a significant and valuable part of the life of the District Court in Connecticut. As a United States District Judge she will be a rare asset to the District and the judiciary as a whole."

The Judiciary Committee also received a letter from 26 former Federal prosecutors who served in the District of Connecticut. Among them are three former U.S. Attorneys.

These former prosecutors praised Judge Merriam as a "highly qualified and competent jurist" who "applies the law fairly and properly without regard to personal preference."

They concluded with their assurance that Judge Merriam "will serve with distinction and honor" in the District of Connecticut.

Judge Merriam was unanimously rated "Well Qualified" by the American Bar Association.

She has the strong support of her home State Senators—Senators BLUMENTHAL and MURPHY—and she received bipartisan support in the Judiciary Committee, with Senators TILLIS and GRAHAM joining the Democratic members in supporting her nomination.

I urge my colleagues to join me voting in support of Judge Merriam's nomination.

VOTE ON MERRIAM NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will

the Senate advise and consent to the Merriam nomination?

Mr. TESTER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 409 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Heinrich	Peters
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Rosen
Booker	Kaine	Sanders
Brown	Kelly	Schatz
Cantwell	King	Schumer
Cardin	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Sinema
Casey	Lujan	Smith
Collins	Manchin	Stabenow
Coons	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Tillis
Duckworth	Merkley	Van Hollen
Durbin	Murkowski	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Warnock
Gillibrand	Murray	Warren
Graham	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	Lankford	Sullivan
Cotton	Lee	Thune
Cramer	Lummis	Toomey
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Portman	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The senior Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate recess subject to the call of the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:25 p.m., recessed subject to the call of the Chair and reassembled at 12:07 a.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PADILLA).